



Afternoon Alert - Friday, December 8, 2017

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HEADLINES

Noon news

NHK gave top play to a report that the Abe cabinet formally approved this morning that the date for the abdication of Emperor Akihito will be April 30, 2019. Prime Minister Abe reportedly said at a cabinet meeting: "This will be the first abdication by an emperor in about 200 years and the first ever in the history of Japanese constitutional government. Various preparations need to be made for the Imperial succession." All commercial networks led with updates on an incident in which the chief priest of Tomioka Hachimangu Shrine in Tokyo and another woman were killed by the younger brother of the chief priest.

INTERNATIONAL

Kono to begin 10-day trip to Middle East, Europe, U.S.

NHK reported that Foreign Minister Kono told reporters that he will visit the Middle East, Europe, and the U.S. starting today. The network said the foreign minister will leave Japan this evening and visit a total of five nations in ten days.

According to the network, Kono will attend an international conference in Bahrain on diplomacy and security where he will deliver a speech and express the view that Japan will actively contribute to bringing peace to the Middle East. In addition, Kono will join a meeting of Japanese and British foreign and defense ministers in London, and chair a UNSC meeting on North Korea. Meanwhile, the network said although Kono was also planning a visit to Saudi Arabia, the visit was canceled due

to difficulty arranging his schedule following President Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as the Israeli capital.

Kono expresses concern about deterioration of Middle East situation

NHK reported at 2 p.m. that Foreign Minister Kono expressed concern that the situation in the Middle East may deteriorate following President Trump's declaration that the U.S. recognizes Jerusalem as the capital of the state of Israel and indicated Japan will provide assistance toward the stabilization of the region. The network quoted Kono as saying: "We are already witnessing rock-throwing and other acts in various places. There is a possibility that the situation in the Middle East will worsen a little. We can expect that it [the President declaration] will complicate U.S. efforts to serve as an intermediary for achieving peace in the Middle East." Asahi published a similar story online.

- [Japan foreign minister to visit Middle East, Europe, U.S.](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan noncommittal on U.S. recognition of Jerusalem as capital of Israel](#) (Mainichi)
- [Editorial: Do not undermine principle of coexistence of two states by recognizing Jerusalem](#) (Sankei)
- [Editorial: Trump's Jerusalem decision is dangerous, fuels opposition](#) (The Mainichi)
- [Cartoon: President Trump](#) (Asahi)
- [Myanmar president to visit Japan next week for health forum](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan eyes startup visa program to lure foreign businesses](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- ["Seiron" column: Strengthen deterrence in Indo-Pacific](#) (Sankei)
- [Japan, Latvia agree to cooperate to rein in N. Korea](#) (Kyodo News)

ECONOMY

- [Japan closes in on infrastructure deal with Bangladesh](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Japan trade minister to join WTO meeting, with e-commerce proposal](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan logs record current account surplus for Oct. of 2.18 tril. yen](#) (Kyodo News)
- [TPP is dead despite the gov't's, media's claim of reaching basic agreement](#) (Sentaku)
- [Abe meets with Rengo chief on wage increase](#) (Yomiuri)

- [Keidanren head calls for new reactor construction as future option](#) (Asahi)
- [Japan to strengthen money-laundering guidelines](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Japan loses its appeal as a regional air hub](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Japan to extend innovation fund's mandate until 2034](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Tokyo starts to certify cruise ships as "homeported at Tokyo"](#) (Nikkei)
- [Editorial: Use management of Atlantic tuna resources as model for Pacific tuna](#) (Sankei)
- [Int'l panel agrees on looser regulations on tropical tuna fishing](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Tokyo governor eyes creating "mayor" post to promote Tokyo as international financial hub](#) (Nikkei)

POLITICS

- [Prime minister's schedule on Dec. 7](#) (Nikkei)
- [Amari re-emerging as a tough negotiator](#) (Sankei)
- [Japan gov't fails to show grounds for Kake school plan approval](#) (Jiji Press)
- [Former DP groups remain intact in anticipation of realignment of opposition parties](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Upper House member Kawada to join CDPJ](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Comparison of parties' stances on Constitution](#) (Mainichi)

SOCIETY

John Lennon's music still resonates 37 years after assassination

NHK's "Close-up Gendai+" reported that Dec. 8 is the day that legendary musician John Lennon was assassinated in New York 37 years ago. The program reported on how he tried to promote peace through his music, focusing on how he wrote the songs "Give Peace a Chance" and "Imagine." The program said his music and lyrics still resonate today.

AMBASSADOR

- ["Our sorrow was transformed into hope," U.S. Ambassador at Miyagi Pref. Gov't](#) (Kahoku Shimpō)

- [Deepening ties between U.S. and Japan through youth exchange, Ambassador Hagerty](#) (Kahoku Shimpō)
- ["Toward even stronger partnership," U.S. Amb. Hagerty in meeting with Miyagi Gov. Murai](#) (Mainichi, Online)

SECURITY

Onodera says introducing cruise missiles does not run counter to defense-exclusive defense policy

NHK reported at 1 p.m. that Defense Minister Onodera formally announced today that Japan will introduce long-range cruise missiles to be mounted on fighters as "stand-off missiles" amid the increasingly harsh security environment. The network quoted Onodera as saying: "The introduction of the long-range cruise missiles is not for the purpose of attacking enemy bases, and therefore it does not run counter to the defense-exclusive defense policy." The network added that the GOJ is planning to introduce the Norway-made JSM with a range of 500 km to be mounted on F-35As and the U.S. made LRASM and JASSM with a range of 900 km to be mounted on F15s. The GOJ will request funding in the budget for the next fiscal year. According to the network, Onodera stressed the significance of the new missile introduction by saying: "It will allow us to conduct more effective and safer operations since we don't have to get close to enemy surface or landing forces that are invading our country. It is also essential in protecting Aegis vessels that are defending our nation from North Korean ballistic missiles."

- [Opinion: Terrorists targeting Tokyo Olympics](#) (Sankei)

OKINAWA LOCAL PRESS

Okinawa furious over latest mishap involving U.S. military aircraft

Ryukyu Shimpō and Okinawa Times both gave prominent front- and inside-page coverage to an incident on Thursday in which what appeared to be part of a U.S. military plane fell onto the roof of a kindergarten located some 300 meters away from the gate to MCAS Futenma. According to the articles, a CH-53 helicopter was witnessed flying over the area just before the object struck the roof. Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga expressed regret over the mishap by telling the press: "This should not have happened because it has caused great anxiety not only for those connected to the kindergarten but also for the people of the entire prefecture." He urged the U.S. military to take thorough measures to prevent a recurrence. The two dailies reported heavily on the anger and concern voiced by the parents of the children and the teachers at the kindergarten as well as those living nearby, who stressed that the incident could have resulted in a catastrophe. They said their lives are constantly in danger due to the U.S. military's lax operation of military aircraft.

- [Proposed budget allocations relating to Ospreys' deployment in Saga to be cut](#) (Ryukyu Shimpo)
 - [Okinawan high school students to present scientific research results](#) (Ryukyu Shimpo)
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